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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Fifty-ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1467th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 31 July 2001, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SHERIFIS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

1. The CHAIRMAN welcomed Ms. Mary Robinson, not only as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights but as Secretary-General of the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and invited her to address the Committee.

2. Ms. ROBINSON (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that she was pleased to address the Committee and extended a particularly warm welcome to its most recent member, Ms. Britz, nominated by Germany to replace Mr. Bryde. Since the Committee's previous session, new staff had joined the Committee's core secretariat and the recently established petitions team. She remained committed to promoting the Annual Appeal for the Year 2001, including the task of raising sufficient voluntary contributions for the two-year programme to improve the servicing of the treaty monitoring system as a whole.

3. The forthcoming World Conference should be one of the most important human rights events at the start of the century and mark a breakthrough in attitudes towards racism, a goal towards which, as Secretary-General of the Conference, she was fully committed. The event provided the Committee with an unparalleled opportunity to urge States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. She congratulated Committee members individually and collectively on the valued contributions that they, along with the other treaty bodies, had made to the preparatory process. Although much hard work remained to be done before the draft declaration and programme of action could be finalized, she remained optimistic about the outcome, particularly on account of the progress made in the many informal consultations that had been held. Among the special events associated with the World Conference was the Special Forum on the Voices of Victims, organized by Ms. McDougall, a Committee member. Arguably of even greater importance than the Conference itself, however, was the need for effective follow-up - a matter on which there was considerable agreement among States. The declaration and programme of action would be of little value, however carefully drafted, without a commitment by all, at international, regional and national levels, to implement them. In action to that end, the Committee had a key role to play.

4. The nature of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance varied between nations and cultures, and the Committee bore the heavy responsibility, through its role in monitoring the Convention's implementation, to guide the international community towards common interpretations and responses, bearing in mind specific circumstances - particularly important when dealing with modern manifestations of racism and racial discrimination. She had noted with interest the Committee's repeated criticism of national legislations for not addressing discrimination on the grounds of "descent", reinforcing the important point that "descent" had its own meaning, not to be confused with race or ethnic or national origin. She also appreciated the Committee's efforts to address the use of the Internet as a means of spreading messages of hate and prejudice. As the United Nations Secretary-General had recently remarked, hostile rhetoric was all too often the precursor to hostile acts, escalating into violence.

conflict and worse. The Committee's emphasis on the need for adequate, effective remedies was likewise welcome and formed an essential part of a human rights approach to combating racism.

5. The phenomenon of multiple discrimination was also of fundamental concern. Discrimination against already vulnerable groups, including women, the poor and sufferers from serious illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, might be compounded by discrimination because of their descent or membership of a particular race or national or ethnic minority. The Committee's recent adoption of its General Recommendation XXV on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination represented an important step forward; she looked forward to similar initiatives as a means to follow up the World Conference. One welcome outcome of the Conference would be a new alliance among States, international bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) against racism. An encouraging sign was that some 3,000 NGOs had already been accredited. She understood that the NGO community had already taken a growing interest, prior to the Committee's current session, in its work. She was aware that the Committee saw NGO contributions as essential to its work and looked forward to a strengthening of the existing cooperation as a result of the Conference. She thanked the Committee for its commitment and hard work in fighting all forms of racial discrimination; it had a natural role as part of the global alliance against racism, and she wished it a successful session.

6. The CHAIRMAN thanked the High Commissioner for Human Rights. As she had said, it was important to look beyond the World Conference, since it was implementation, not mere words, that would count. To that purpose, the Committee had an important role and was ready to play it. The major themes of the Conference were, of course, those set forth in the Convention and would therefore be given top priority.

7. Mr. de GOUTTES said he appreciated the High Commissioner's regular and frequent meetings with the Committee. The World Conference was indeed an opportunity not only to review the past but to face the challenge of the future. The draft declaration and programme of action was a complex document and in places lacking in focus and possibly controversial. There was little mention of the Committee, references appearing in only 14 paragraphs out of 264 paragraphs in the draft programme and 131 in the draft declaration. He wondered, therefore, whether there could be greater focus on the Convention's provisions, especially article 1, paragraph 1, which defined racial discrimination, and on measures to combat the latter, the more so since the Convention was the most widely accepted instrument in the field of human rights. Perhaps, at the same time, steps could be contemplated to make it more forward-looking and action-oriented. He accordingly asked whether the High Commissioner thought it possible to involve the Convention more in the current discussions, including those in regional groups and those of the group of eminent persons.

8. Mr. ABOUL-NASR said he fully agreed with the High Commissioner's statement, during her speech the previous day, that the true test of the declaration and programme of action would be whether it met the expectations of the many victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance throughout the world, who had the strongest reasons to be watching the outcome of the World Conference. He also agreed that the truly important thing was effective follow-up. In that regard, he hoped that the Committee would be fully involved in effective implementation measures and that, for that purpose, at least one of its members would be able to participate in the discussions of the working groups and other preparatory bodies. He

also requested the High Commissioner to delegate a senior conference administrator to assist the Committee with the administrative and logistic matters involved in preparations for its members' attendance at the World Conference. Lastly, he endorsed the good wishes expressed to the High Commissioner for success in her task.

9. Ms. ROBINSON (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that she was encouraged by the Committee's emphasis on the follow-up to the World Conference and on the role it could and should play in that regard. She agreed that the draft declaration and programme of action needed further refinement, although much had already been done by the various working groups in that regard. If more attention were paid to the Convention itself the latter could prove a broadly acceptable basis on which to work. She saw no reason why Committee members should not continue their efforts to become involved in the drafting work being carried out in open meetings of the two working groups, and in other ad hoc ways; she invited the Committee to use its ingenuity and skill in that regard.

10. The members of the group of eminent persons had been chosen deliberately from among people who were not experts or directly connected with the United Nations but were eminent in their respective fields, the aim being to reflect the importance of involving the entire world community in addressing the faults of the past and stressing positive aspects for the future.

11. She appreciated Mr. Aboul-Nasr's endorsement of what she had said about the true text of the follow-up to the World Conference. Ways must be found to establish the Committee's role in giving effect to what would by then be the definitive text of the declaration and programme of action. With regard to administrative aspects of attending the World Conference, she would ensure that a staff member was available to assist the Committee.

12. The CHAIRMAN noted that, in addition to the Committee's General Recommendation on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, the Committee had taken a number of other initiatives, such as its thematic debate on the Roma, and planned to apply the thematic debate approach to other issues - a matter to be further considered at the Committee's sixtieth session, following the outcome of the World Conference. The Committee had also continued to address discrimination on the grounds of "descent", where necessary criticizing national legislations for overlooking that point. Such a stance had inevitably attracted some counter-criticism but showed, he felt sure, that the Committee was not biased in any direction at all. He thanked the High Commissioner for her attendance and assured her of its readiness to help in every possible way to achieve a result-oriented outcome of the World Conference.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 3) (continued)
(CERD/C/59/Misc.3/Rev.3)

13. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a number of changes in the proposed programme of work for the current session, relating to agenda item 5. The list of States parties whose initial and periodic reports were to be considered would not include Lithuania, at the request of that State party, whereas Egypt had been included in the list, after consultation with the Permanent Missions of the two countries. With regard to the list of States parties regarding which the Committee was to review implementation of the Convention because of seriously overdue periodic reports, a request by Hungary, received prior to the session, to be

removed from the list had been accepted, its place to be taken by Barbados. Bosnia and Herzegovina had likewise applied, prior to the session, to be removed from the list, but there had been no time to invite a replacement. Uganda and Yemen had been removed from the list, having submitted reports immediately prior to the current session. Bolivia and Tanzania had likewise been removed from the list, having stated their intention to submit reports shortly. The remaining countries in that category were therefore Barbados, Mali and Liberia. All Permanent Missions had been asked about their intention to participate in the current session. That of Liberia had been asked, at the Country Rapporteur's request, whether it would consider a postponement of the review procedure from 1 August to either 7 or 8 August.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 5) (continued)

(CERD/C/406/Add.1)

Twelfth and thirteenth periodic reports of Italy (continued) (CERD/C/406/Add.1)

14. At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the delegation of Italy resumed their places at the Committee table.

15. Mr. MORENO (Italy), replying to questions raised by members of the Committee, indicated that tables of statistics labelled annexes 1 to 4 had unfortunately not been printed with the report and would be distributed at the meeting. Tables were also being distributed with recent disaggregated statistics on the numbers and ethnic and geographic origin of immigrants. Morocco had the largest number of immigrants (146,491) and Bosnia and Herzegovina the smallest (10,399). Foreigners represented 2.2 per cent of the overall population, and as of September 2000, 28.71 per cent of the prison population, most of them without papers. The latter were not included in the figure of 2.2 per cent of the total population. Foreigners legally resident in Italy accounted for less than 2 per cent of the prison population. Many of the foreigners in prison were there simply for lack of any alternative - they could not be released since they had no domicile and no family members in Italy. The tables also contained statistics on the number of crimes committed by foreigners. Foreigners without papers could only regularize their situation through special amnesty laws. As a result of the most recent such law, passed on 27 March 1998, in December 1998 some 350,000 foreigners had legalized their situation, the only criteria being documented proof of residence in Italy before the date of the law and an offer of work. For the year 2001, 50,000 permanent and 33,000 seasonal foreign workers would receive work permits to enter Italy.

16. In an effort to reduce clandestine immigration and thereby reduce the vulnerability of illegal immigrants to criminal organizations, and to promote better planning of migratory flows, his Government was negotiating bilateral agreements with countries which were sources of large numbers of migrants, and had already concluded agreements with Morocco, Tunisia and Albania. Preferential treatment was accorded to skilled immigrants and potential migrants were encouraged to attend training courses in areas such as nursing and informatics financed by the Italian Government in their country of origin. He recognized that there were more immigrants from some regions than from others but stressed that that imbalance was not the result of any political decision. Twenty-two reception centres had been created to deal with asylum-seekers at major airports and seven temporary centres had been established for non-documented

foreigners who were awaiting repatriation. Italy collaborated fully with and had adopted the recommendations of all relevant European Union and Council of Europe institutions with regard to the reception and living conditions of foreigners in such centres. In addition, on 30 August 2000, minimum uniform standards had been adopted which included a charter of rights drafted in collaboration with NGO representatives. Foreigners were therefore aware of their rights and any opportunities available to them, and NGOs had full access to temporary centres in order to provide medical, social, religious and other assistance to migrants. Great efforts had been made in recent years to strengthen controls on illegal migration into Italy and through it into the rest of Europe and in 2000, for example, 65 per cent of illegal immigrants, or more than 60,000 persons, had been deported. He stressed, however, that the deportees were always treated very humanely. With regard to the specific problem of illegal domestic employees, the overwhelming majority of whom were women, taxation legislation had been amended to allow a tax reduction for domestic employees, which would encourage the regularization of their status.

17. Extensive use was made of cultural assistants/translators, thousands of whom were currently working across the country. They were generally foreigners themselves and received training in language, human rights and the regulatory framework concerning migrants. Under contract to government offices or cooperatives, the assistants worked in the education, justice and health sectors, in prisons, in particular prisons for minors, in police stations and in local communities to assist immigrants and their families and facilitate liaison with the administration. The programme was an excellent way of providing work for foreigners and training them to help their peers. With regard to illegal immigrants who were in detention, the prison director could overcome the lack of a valid identity document by requesting the tax code on behalf of detainees (report, para. 154) so that they could work in prison, or outside prison if some alternative measure to imprisonment was ordered, or so that they could find work more easily after leaving prison.

18. With regard to other recent legislation, a law on measures against trafficking in persons was before Parliament, which would criminalize trafficking as a form of slavery and give the police extended powers in such cases. In 2000, a single Act for the application of all regulations arising out of the 1998 Immigration Act had been promulgated. One of its provisions allowed for persons at risk of becoming victims of trafficking or criminal organizations to request a residence permit on those special grounds, which would give them access to the full range of social assistance programmes; to date 726 individuals, of whom 675 were young women, who otherwise would probably have been forced into a life of prostitution, had taken advantage of that provision.

19. The large numbers of undeclared workers was a source of grave concern. His Government was drafting a bill which would attempt to regularize their situation, but it was in fact very difficult to control flows of migrant workers. The Government had made a deliberate decision not to use extraordinary measures, such as deployment of the armed forces, to prevent immigrants from reaching Italy. It preferred to receive them and subsequently decide on their status, while at all times providing them with humane treatment.

20. Turning to the definition and recognition of minorities, he said that, although the Constitution recognized linguistic minorities, over time so-called historical linguistic minorities

such as the Albanians living in Sicily, or the Catalans, Occitans, Ladinos and Greeks, among others, had also come to be accepted as de facto ethnic minorities and, with regard to the Roma, he referred Committee members to paragraphs 232 to 240 of the report. He stressed that discrimination was prohibited by both the Penal and the Civil Codes. Under the former, discrimination on racial, ethnic or religious grounds, incitement to hatred or discrimination, organizations which promoted hatred or discrimination and the use of racist symbols such as the swastika were illegal; in addition, racial and religious intolerance were considered to be aggravating circumstances requiring increased penalties when the courts were judging criminal acts. The Civil Code defined discrimination in the same terms as article 1 of the Convention and prohibited discrimination in the public sector and in the workforce. Complaints were heard by the ordinary courts, which could order compensation for victims and he pointed out that Italy had signed Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which provided for immediate prosecution of any discriminatory act.

21. Police and prison staff received training courses in prisoners' rights in accordance with the recommendations of relevant United Nations and European bodies and treaties. Foreign prisoners, for example, were issued with a pamphlet in seven languages and an official register was kept for all prisoners in which any signs of injury or ill-treatment must be noted. He stressed that the rights of all migrants, including non-European Union migrants and their families and migrants whose situation was not regularized, were protected, and referred Committee members to paragraphs 70 to 83 of the report in that regard.

22. There were approximately 120,000 Roma in Italy, of whom 85 per cent were of Italian origin and 30 per cent were nomadic or semi-nomadic and he pointed out that the Italian word "Zingari" was not a pejorative term. The Roma were a historic linguistic community recognized as such under the Constitution but in recent years there had been increased immigration of Gypsy populations from the Balkans and the Middle East representing several ethnic groups. The Government was aware of the problems posed by the Roma and Parliament was currently debating measures to improve their situation, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee and other international bodies. Programmes had been organized to encourage Roma children, especially nomad children, to attend school and to guarantee their right to education; they were provided with bursaries and orientation courses. Such children were often responsible for much of what might be called petty delinquency in urban areas and every effort was being made to encourage them to attend school and to offer them sports and recreational opportunities, although he once again stressed the difficulty of promoting change in non-sedentary communities and meeting the needs of the traditionally recognized linguistic communities as well as those of new arrivals, such as the Kosovars.

23. The same type of crime was to be found in the outlying urban slums, but there the nomad population tended to band together in encampments that made it more difficult to integrate them harmoniously into the community. The problem was less acute in the provinces and the countryside. Another consideration was the occupation of particular Roma groups, such as the Sicilian Camminanti, who were Italian citizens with a distinctive way of life as circus performers. The Government was studying approaches adopted in other countries to their Roma

populations, but in any case the solutions had to be regional and municipal. Cosenza, in Calabria, for instance, had developed a special design for low-cost housing with large open communal spaces, adapted to the Roma customs. The system of cultural mediators (report, para. 260), 65 of whom were active in Milan, Turin, Mantova and Rome, was being expanded countrywide because it had proved to be an excellent tool for communication with the Roma.

24. All Roma citizens had full access to public housing, and their camps were being transformed into more permanent communities with adequate health and social facilities. The Government was doing its best to meet the whole spectrum of Roma needs, including those of the mostly undocumented Roma without health or social benefits. Stateless Roma were protected under the 1954 New York Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. The 2000 report of the National Commission on Immigration Policy recommended that the Government and the Parliament should act urgently to combat discrimination against Roma, renew residence permits for Roma victims of ethnic cleansing pending adoption of the new asylum law, revise the citizenship laws and devise ways of extending to the Roma the benefits of new immigration legislation, ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, making it possible for the Roma to qualify as a linguistic minority, ensure living conditions for the Roma that offered at least minimum standards of health, education, employment and safety, and develop a consistent overall government policy in coordination with local authorities and in consultation at all stages with the Roma community itself.

25. The involvement of organized crime in the clandestine flows of immigrants into Italy had indeed reached crisis proportions, and comprehensive international and national action would be required to combat it. Criminal activity linked to immigration began with the organized transport of illegal boat people, and the subsequent exploitation in Italy of those who actually reached their destination by related prostitution rings and other criminal groups. The presence of a criminal element among immigrants was certainly a cause for the growing intolerance among the Italian populace, which the Government sought to counter by combating stereotypes and promoting a positive image of immigrants. Employers were now increasingly ready to provide government-subsidized employee housing for immigrants.

26. Football-related hooliganism, an insidious recent development, was severely punishable by law. In addition, the Government encouraged football associations to exercise self-discipline and administer sports justice through disqualification of offending athletes; it arranged for sports champions to issue public messages on the subject; and it used television to publicly censure those responsible for putting up racist notices or placards.

27. Italy's development policy consisted in bringing development where it was needed, and hence to transplant some government programmes to the immigrants' developing countries of origin. For example, with assistance from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), it had established small- and medium-sized enterprises in the Mediterranean basin, and it had concluded bilateral agreements on the integration of immigrant flows into the labour market or the schools, so that the manpower thus trained could then return to the countries of origin.

28. Italy sought to combat the employment of illegal aliens by a combination of enforcement and welfare assistance, nationally and regionally. In Bologna, for instance, the Mancino Law allowed no room for racial or religious discrimination or for acts of racial hatred, because it attacked the roots of the problem. The latest government report on immigration, containing up-to-date information, would be supplied to the Committee.

29. Regarding the statistics on access by non-European Union workers to jobs and work permits and on the comparative rates of unemployment for Italians and immigrants, the differences in the rates of unemployment were not between Italians and non-Italians but were linked to the differing labour market requirements within the country: in the north there was practically full employment, but in the centre and the south of Italy unemployment ranged from 8 to 30 per cent. In 2000, unemployment in Italy as a whole had for the first time fallen to 9.9 per cent. In 1999, 5 million Italians - or 10 per cent - had been registered on waiting lists for jobs, as against 190,000 non-European Union workers - or 15 per cent of such immigrants. There were no salary distinctions between male and female workers or Italian and non-Italian workers. The delegation was providing the Committee with written statistics broken down by gender, occupational group and the like.

30. A thorough government investigation of the recent anti-globalization violence that had occurred in Genoa had shown that a peaceful anti-globalization organization had been infiltrated by several thousand members of violent armed and anarchist groups, trained by urban guerrillas, who had been responsible for all the disturbances.

31. The CHAIRMAN, speaking in his personal capacity, underscored the striking gap between the economically advanced north and the distressed south of Italy, where at least 30 per cent of Italians themselves were unemployed.

32. Mr. YUTZIS asked what stage had been reached in the judicial proceedings being held in Bologna against perpetrators of racist violence (report, para. 200), and whether racist organizations as well as individuals were being prosecuted, as called for by the Convention. He would also appreciate information on similar court cases in other cities.

33. Mr. ABOUL-NASR noted that Italy had much experience with both emigration and immigration, although the tide had turned towards immigration into Italy. He would like to know the estimated government figures for the number of immigrant workers currently needed to sustain Italy's economic boom, and the fields in which they were needed. Despite the economic benefits brought by such immigrant workers, the reaction in the Italian press was often one of resentment; and he wondered if the Government had made any effort to educate the press and people on the matter.

34. Mr. THORNBERRY, referring to the issue of the Roma, said that, in order to overcome the harassment of Roma children in local schools, he recommended a peripatetic solution, where the teacher followed a Roma community as it moved from one place to another. Everyone needed an education in civics instilling respect and tolerance of others so as to combat prejudice and racism. While criminal behaviour was not inherent in groups, some crime patterns were probably the product of interaction between different sections of the population. Consultation was the key to the engagement of Roma organizations and certainly international law recognized

the right of minorities to participate in decision-making. Attention should be paid to the language used about Roma in politics and the media. The numerous positive aspects of the report were clear evidence of the Italian Government's strenuous efforts to deal with the problems faced. He welcomed the country's recognition that diversity was a precious asset.

35. The CHAIRMAN agreed that engagement was crucial to Roma participation in society. A few months earlier a meeting of 78 organizations representing civil society had been held in Rome and had proved the value of such an exercise.

36. Mr. SHAHI said that the wealth of information contained in the report showed the Italian Government's serious commitment to eliminating racial discrimination. Did any Web sites propagating hate speech exist in Italy? What action could the Italian Government take to suppress them? Could criminal action be instituted within Italy against racist Web sites established abroad? Did the Italian Government have any plans to attract the migrant labour which would be needed to sustain the country's economic growth?

37. Mr. de GOUTTES said that, according to paragraph 256 et seq. of the report, there had been a shift in Italian education policy away from separate "Lacio Drom" schools for Roma children towards their integration in ordinary schools. The report had listed a number of attendant problems and he therefore wished to know if the Italian Government intended to persevere with that policy despite those difficulties.

38. Mr. TANG Chengyuan, asked if Italy had introduced the severe measures required to combat criminal organizations like "The snake's head" which trafficked in illegal immigrants from China and whose activities had been directly responsible for the death of many of those people at sea.

39. Mr. MORENO (Italy) assured Mr. Yutzis that the trial he had mentioned was still under way and that he would inform the Committee of its outcome. The Mancino Law applied to both individuals and organizations; under its article 3, any organization convicted of inciting racial hatred could be prohibited and its activities banned. The judgements in some leading cases of the European Court of Human Rights had established the principle that freedom of expression could not be restricted and so it had been necessary to pass legislation which explicitly made incitement to racial hatred a criminal offence and provided a legal basis for confiscating the property of organizations guilty of such abuse. Article 18 of the Constitution effectively prohibited fascist organizations from glorifying the Mussolini regime.

40. Regarding the number of aliens required by Italy in order to sustain the country's economic development, he said that, although the statistics produced by trade and industry tended to be inflated, it had been estimated that 83,000 entries per annum would be needed in the near future to counter the shrinking and ageing of the population and that figure was set to rise. An attempt was currently being made to recruit foreign nurses and information technology specialists. The prevailing belief that Italian civilization had been enriched by contacts with other cultures and peoples prompted his Government to strive to combat stereotypes which would be harmful to migrants and the receiving society alike.

41. His country acknowledged the wrongs of its colonial past and believed that it had a duty to assist its former colonies like Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia. For that reason, the Italian Government would actively pursue efforts to educate those who had not learned the lessons of the past.

42. Turning to the issue of Roma children's schooling, he explained that the "Lacio Drom" schools had been abolished because it had been found that they perpetuated divisions within society. Since most Roma were no longer nomads or foreigners, it was considered that they should be integrated in ordinary schools, the Italian Government would press ahead with that policy, while at the same time ensuring respect for their different traditions and culture, as diversity was a great asset for any country.

43. In order to increase the participation of civil society, Italy had adopted the strategic approach of convening regular meetings with NGOs to which representatives of the international community were also invited.

44. It had been possible to close down some Web sites spreading hate speech. Under the Mancino Law, individuals or organizations propagating hate speech could be prosecuted and their property confiscated if they were operating from within Italian territory, but the situation was different and highly complicated if the provider or browser was situated in foreign territory. The Council of Europe had done some thorough research and produced statistics on the subject. Italy had taken action against radio and television companies which had overstepped the bounds of decency and had adopted energetic measures to dismantle paedophilic networks and Web sites which often involved children from the third world. The material of anyone accessing such a Web site was seized and the person was jailed.

45. While criminal behaviour was not inherent in a specific group of the population, some illegal immigrants living on the margins of society had been forced to take to crime in order to survive, because they did not have the requisite papers enabling them to obtain proper employment, while other illegal immigrants entered the country with the sole intention of setting up a crime ring. The problem was not specific to Italy and measures would have to be taken to overcome it. His Government was doing its best to combat infiltration of the country by foreign criminal gangs. It was, however, difficult to isolate criminal elements when boats containing hundreds of asylum-seekers arrived at an Italian port. Nevertheless, the Government regarded measures to dismantle such organizations as a matter of priority, since it was aware that they ran factories where Chinese girls were treated like slave labour.

46. Mr. BOSSUYT (Country Rapporteur) commended the Italian delegation's frank and detailed statement, which had answered all his questions. Illegal migration was clearly a source of crime, exploitation and the violation of human rights as well as being a scourge jeopardizing the spirit of tolerance among the population, since people were not always able to distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. He thanked the Italian delegation for its constructive attitude.

47. The CHAIRMAN expressed satisfaction at the fruitful dialogue with the Italian delegation and the wealth of information provided, reflecting the exemplary work accomplished by the State party in implementing the Convention, and invited the delegation to attend the meeting at which the Committee would be discussing its concluding observations on Italy's report.

48. Mr. MORENO (Italy) said he hoped that the achievements of the Committee would be reflected in the deliberations of the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.